

# FROM INTERRITORISED TO DECENTERED IDENTITY

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## Abstract

The article analyses the change of national identity and its reflections in education system. The researches of foreign authors show the change of identity's concept from one-dimensional identity's model to multidimensional one. Lithuanian scientific researches disclose the problem of identity in education system through reflection of different pupils' identities in the class. The article presents the model of practice of hermeneutical pedagogy that creates the conditions for enablement of decentered identity in the class, avoiding traumatic circumstances of development of pupils' identity.

KEYWORDS: national identity, decentered identity, hermeneutical pedagogy.

## Introduction

Modern forms of migration, interculturalism, globalization change state's politics, socium, education system. Identity's issue with hidden and visible discourses is not an exception. The analysis of identity's construct is not a new problem which origins are related to psychoanalysis, but when the issue of identity's change is questioned regarding modern processes it becomes especially important to various spheres. Identity is formed by various social, cultural, political factors, therefore, different types of identity are respectfully distinguished: cultural, national, religious, political, social, etc. In the course of changing society due to modern globalization processes, society's relationship with the past changes as well. This stimulates to reconsider the construct of national identity. Society's relationship with the past becomes fragmental, inconsequent, grand narratives collapse, as a result national identity gains more shades of subjectivity and changes collective, identified identity's construct. The more traditions are lost, rejected when everyday life demands reconstruction under dialectics conditions, i.e. local – global, native – immigrant, etc. the more individuals are forced to negotiate their identity. It is worth to mention that classical theory on national identity is related to the territory, geopolitical location. However, modern processes consider the discourse of national identity as interritorised (concept used by V. Rubavičius – interritorised identity / state) and raise the aspects of global identity. Consequently, identity becomes decentered, deterritorised, there are no links with a particular geopolitical location, therefore, the aspect of ethnic identity independent from a particular location is being raised. Recently, the issue of decentered identity has been especially relevant in education system when due to various migration forms a person does not relate himself / herself to a particular location but preserves emotional, psychological, natural links with the nation combining emotional shades of other cultures. It becomes important to analyse the identities of different pupils encountering ethnic variety in a homogeneous environment. Inevitably there is a need to speak about hermeneutical pedagogy that forms conditions for a dialogue and enablement of *distinctiveness* in intercultural educational environment.

**Aim of the article** – to analyse the change of national identity's concept.

**Object of the article** – changes of national identity.

**Methods:** scientific literary analysis, meta-analysis.

## Theoretical modifications of identity's construct

The beginning of identity's investigation is related to psychoanalysis, psychology and sociology, however, in contemporary scientific researches this concept is being widely used in social sciences and humanities (Wrong 2000). Traditional theory of identity covers psychology's deposits and the beginning is related to Erikson's personal perspective of individual's identity. It is an individualistic theory which does not analyse groups of individuals or social identities covering gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation. Traditional theories concentrate on individual, personal theory of identity's evolution ignoring existential dimension of group of people. However, Derald Sue (2007) suggested tripartite structure that helps to perceive diverse dimensions of personal identity. He used three levels of identity: *individual* – sharing of

individual qualities with the group members; *group* – covering such components as gender, class, race, socioeconomic status, religion, culture, etc; *universal* – individuals share their experience with the whole humanity.

The importance of identity's investigations grew in 1980 and 1990 when not only individual forms of identity but collective ones as well were started to be investigated. Gitlin (1995) disclosed how identity's politics influenced American culture whereas Calhoun (1994) found out what influence social theory has upon identity. Woodward (1997) revealed identity's crisis at individual and collective levels. In the works of Browning, Halci and Webster (2000) identity is involved in the discussions of narrative's role in the society, postmodernism, globalization, nationalism, cultural pluralism, social movements, social inequality. Identity also became a central position in feminist social theory (Griffiths 1995), in masculinity studies (Connell 1995), for the youth and teenagers where Baumeister (1996) shows how detraditionalism gives a choice, but causes problems in identity's formation. Touraine (1997) speaks about fragmentation and loss of identity. Duality of identity in postmodernism was investigated by Elliot (1996).

Often identity is defined through a binary position: similarity and difference. Consequently, when constructing own identity there is a double opportunity: 1) construction of identity through the similarity with other representatives of a group (Festinger, 1954); 2) or through the difference from the existing group i.e. a person realizes himself / herself as much as he / she differs from others (Mc Guire, 1978). The idea of solid and harmonized person's identity is strange also to Lyotard (2010). In his opinion, person's identity changes depending upon the situation, therefore, various aspects of identity are characteristic to an individual. In collision with *distinctiveness of the other* an individual starts reflecting own identity in order to see how similar or different he/she is from *the other*. As a consequence, identity may be treated as a reflexive project (Giddens, 2000), when we are as we are because we make ourselves like this. This way of making foresee the trajectory of identity's evolution from the past till the foreseen future while creating the present. According to Giddens (2000), reflectivity is constant and inclusive.

A certain dominating cultural discourse may reconstruct identity in a new way which in this case is expressed as hybridity (Anthias, 2001). Hybrid identities may be liberating and transgressive since they issue challenges and trespass old limits and offer the third place (Bhabha, 1990). The example of the third place could be Lithuanian diaspora abroad, for instance in England. The third place here is named as a connection between Lithuanian and English cultures. Diasporic identity is treated as engaging culturally syncretic third place. Hybridity, transnationalism – modern trends that issue challenges to territorised collective identity's idea, e.g. nation. When hybridity is analysed, usually it is understood at the perspective of globalization (Anthias, 2001). The concept of hybridity is influenced by the theories of postmodernism, post-structuralism and reflects identity's constructive conception (Anthias 2001, 621). Multiple and hybrid identities are the axis of post-structural culture theory and postmodernism. The theory of hybridity treats the identities as changing and random/unexpected. Cultural hybridization points at melting of old forms and construction of the new ones. This phenomena might be detected in migration studies, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies (Anthias 2001; Back 2002; Nederveen Pieterse 2001). As a consequence, we may state that postmodern state changes the concept of national identity from territorised to decentered, deterritorised.

The component of modern identity's theory is the theory of identity's negotiations emphasizing the conception of identity or reflexive "me" considered through explanation mechanism in the process of intercultural communication (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Identity is a reflexive, empirical construct of self imagination, which is formed through culture and certain collision situations. The theory of identity negotiations is defined through interaction process when individuals define, express, modify, question their own and others' identities (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Mervyn F. Bendle (2002) distinguish the following ways of identity's formation: 1) through similarity and difference involving social, racial, ethnic, gender categories; 2) through contextuality when everyone possesses different social situation providing multiple experience; 3) through cultural categories reflecting modern identity's conceptions; 4) through subjective feeling of understanding of every "me" based on internal life; 5) under the conditions of personality's social activities; 6) through narrative "me" which is understood as a narration who I am; 7) under psychoanalytical conditions where identity and "me" are perceived as being constructed by mind's unconscious structures.

## Tendencies of identity's change in educational environment

Education system is an important aspect while analysing the shift of national identity. Scientists of qualitative researches concentrate on the issue of negotiations of children and teenagers' national identity, analyse the meaning of their dependence upon national state and constructions of national identifications through education system (Howard, Gill 2001; Philippou 2005; Toomey 2006).

While analyzing the case of Lithuanian education in respect of national identity it is worth to mention that significance of national identity is a relevant problem in Lithuania. This was influenced by oppression of the Soviet Union when the conception of global citizen was actively formed using education system as a tool. However, after Lithuania has restored independence, special attention was paid at preservation and fostering of national identity. This reflection is felt also in today's education system. The schools appeal to safety and development of national identity through linguistic competences and practice also presenting a homogeneous discourse of culture. However, when Lithuania became the EU member, when entered the Schengen area rapidly developing various modern globalization processes caused the need for reconceptualisation of national identity. Active emigration of Lithuanian citizens, re-emigration cause identity's subjectivity i.e. when nationality becomes not as geopolitically defined structure but is related to emotional affection to the nation. Therefore, we may state that national identity is decentered and deterritorised. Consequently, instead of the word nation's citizen a broader concept is being used – global citizen. Since this concept is not legal, there are many doubts what the concept global citizen involves and how its usage should be reflected in education system. However, various investigations carried out by Lithuanian scientists testify about the problem of the change of Lithuanian national identity in education system: L. Lukočiūtė, R. Mickutė "Hermeneutic analysis of teaching/learning experiences caused by return emigration" (2008); J. Ruškus, D. K. Kuzmickaitė "Education features of the children who returned to Lithuania: the case of Šeltinis school" (2008), J. Ruškus "Experience of pupils of Lithuanian origin who came to Lithuania: the case of "Lithuanian house" school" (2008); D. Antinienė "National identity of Lithuanian academic youth" (2011). According to Antinienė (2011), the content of individual's national identity defined as national self-consciousness may be very wide: it is formed by the feeling of dependence to the nation, understanding of nation's interests, culture, knowing the language, place of residence. In addition, cognition and evaluation of own nation as well as other nations become very important.

The importance of national identity is significant to education systems of other countries. This is shown by various researches: *Ethnic school context and the national and sub-national identifications of pupils* (Orhan Agirdag, Mieke Van Houtte and Piet Van Avermaet, 2011). The authors of this work analyse the change of national identity of immigrants' children in Belgian schools. The research points out that identities of immigrants' children do not fight with each other, on the contrary, multiple identities are created. It is emphasized that greater ethnic variety at school stimulates pupils': 1) social, educational isolation; or 2) tendency to recategorise own identity trying to reduce social tension with local pupils. Majority of researchers use the concept *biculturalism* (Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris 2002; Tadmor, Tetlock, & Peng, 2009), which provides dual opportunity: a) assimilation or b) isolation. Alba (2005) indicates that immigrants may pursue equal cooperation with the majority in order to reduce social tension, isolation through institutionalisation which includes the following forms: language, religion and citizenship.

Another research *Teachers from the majority population—pupils from the minority: Results of a research in the field of Greek minority education* (Magos, 2006), analyses the case of Greek schools, the problem of identity of Turkish immigrants' pupils encountering with local educators. The research emphasizes that teachers are still against heterogeneous classes, discriminate ethnically and culturally diverse pupils and pursue an "ideal" class which, in their opinion, is homogeneous. Majority of Greek teachers identify themselves as defenders of Greek culture and concentrate teaching on protection and development of Greek identity.

The research *The Culture Project: diasporic negotiations of ethnicity, identity and culture among teachers, pupils and parents in Chinese language schools* (Archer, Francis, Mauc, 2010) analyses the discourse of Chinese immigrants' identity at schools in Great Britain. In the research it is indicated that parents and teachers consider schools as a source that helps to feel more Chinese. Often identity is related to culture and it is treated that loss of culture is equal to identity loss or identity crisis. In addition, in the research it is emphasized that there are possible hybrid identities that point at the third place (Bhabha,

1990). The third place in this research is indicated as a link between Chinese and British cultures when speaking about Chinese diaspora in Great Britain.

The above mentioned researches show that schools in various countries encountering ethnic variety also encounter the problem of pupils' identity. Therefore, empowerment of heterogeneous class and dialogue within it become very important but not the expropriation of discourses and reticence. The importance of heterogeneous environment is illustrated by *the common ingroup identity model* (CIIM) (Gaertner, Dovidio 2000), which indicates the importance of inter-ethnic contact and friendship. Referring to this theory, contacting individuals from different social and cultural groups show greater tendency to recategorise their identities. For the strangers it creates a wish to contact and become friends with the local, also it might influence strengthening of national identity. For the local people it may reduce social tension with the strangers. In such case negotiation of identity becomes essential. It is worth to mention that a school and education politics carried out in it are the reflection of national politics. According to Rubavičius (2011), state is effective in education system where it can stimulate consolidation of national features. Every education system is a political way in an appropriate manner to expropriate discourses with all accompanying forms of knowledge (Foucault, 1998). Every society controls the "production" of discourse through which the conception of identity is formed to be able to manage it, and when the discourse becomes inconvenient – to eliminate it. According to Foucault (1998), it is done through various prohibitions, separations, rejections. In this case national identity is considered as an object controlled by the great discourses. However, construction of identity involves also an individual level when an individual can make certain decisions.

In a globalised world we inevitably encounter *others*, therefore, inter-subjectivity is inevitable, as a consequence, through the cognition of *other*, enablement of *other* individual changes his/her own identity. Schröer (2009), who investigates the problems of modern intercultural communication, revealed the links of a dialogue and hermeneutic practice through personal and group identity. Schröer presents critics of methodological nationalism as creating obstacles to cultural dialogue. The author emphasizes that the main postulate of intercultural communication theory is *unreachability of other subjective awareness*, what means that individuals even from the same cultures have different life stories. Therefore, Schröer states that it becomes important to enable not only differences but also their dialogue which is possible when revealing various different layers of meanings. It is applicable while speaking about identity subjectivity, when moving away from the origins of national identity we are approaching the conception of global identity. The researches discussed above also point at limitation of classical identity theories and question the need for multiple, hybrid, global identity theories in education system.

### **Hermeneutic pedagogical practice in the class: towards decentered identity**

When analyzing the issues of experience of identity's safety and development of migrants' pupils at school we undoubtedly encounter the grand / master narratives which through the programmes of pupil's education and self-education at school are expressed as power discourses that control pupils' social, cultural, personal medium. In power games the winner is the one who has more powers. Therefore, pedagogues representing education system are the agents representing power discourses and the pupils in this case obey the rules of power games. In the course of changes of grand narratives, identity change is also possible, however, identity formed in hermeneutical interpretation is more stable. A pupil interpreting symbols, phenomena or reports in his / her own way that are not his/her own make them the own ones. Therefore, the issue of subjective identity arises. However, we must admit that hermeneutics in education is still related to the grand narratives.

- Through contradiction: when a teacher as a representative of grand narratives presents own version of interpretation and a pupil adopts them, i.e. learns by heart, disciplinary is apparent. Then hermeneutics and grand narratives present their versions and contradict each other. A pupil is influenced by propaganda;
- Hermeneutic interpretation and grand narratives may coincide, then there are no contradictions and disciplinary is not apparent, free subjective formation of identity is expressed.

Therefore, it is very important to speak about identities of different pupils, especially encountering ethnic variety in homogeneous environment. Inevitably there is a need to speak about a dialogue and enablement of *distinctiveness* in intercultural educational environment. In order to enable the differences and their equal dialogue one of the methods might be the *method of hermeneutical classroom* (Sotirou, 1993), as a way to solve the problems in intercultural classes. Practical didactic applicability of

hermeneutical philosophy occurs here. The feature of hermeneutical class is a public and multiple discussion of pupils' subjectivity, enablement of their voices, explanation of related meanings and problems applying the methods of hermeneutics, dialogue and dialectics (Mažeikis 2010, 40). Hermeneutics helps to disclose the multiplicity of meaning whereas a dialogue – to emphasize existential problems. Migrantology researchers emphasise that safety and development of identity which is defined through variations of identity, its forms, existential, educational problems is an acute problem of integration into society. As Mažeikis (2010, 42) states, the method of hermeneutical class is also applied when a group of pupils or students is trying to look deeper inside any literary or historic text in order to reveal its either already lost meanings or hidden between the lines or implication. Such reading is slow and thorough different from the one characteristic to modern world way of fast reading when it is considered that the thought read at a glance is adequate to the thought of writer's era or civilization.

While analyzing practical application of hermeneutics it is worth to mention that its elements are used not only in education system trying to enable distinctiveness but they are also applied in psychoanalysis when trying to reveal various layers of meaning, also used in intercultural communication. When analyzing intercultural groups and migration Liberman emphasizes the importance of hermeneutics method while solving intercultural communication problems (Liberman, 1984). He highlights that hermeneutic communication analysis points not at the communication act but at what the communication says, what meaningful content is revealed. The scientist stresses that absence of deep dialogue stimulates tensions. Intercultural hermeneutic class is a group analysis of subjects identity's narrative applying method of hermeneutics which is related to exploring and repetitive understanding (Mažeikis 2010, 45). Hermeneutic class provides opportunities for the change of individual's self-understanding and deep intercultural evolution of participants. Deep understanding and its repetition creates conditions for changes of a person and his/her thinking, together changing the essence of life, relationship with social world, culture or even with the world itself.

Modern schools when encountering migration challenges also encounter the importance of intercultural (self)education. When children with different ethnic backgrounds come to schools they encounter educational and existential problems, i.e. they experience various traumas of identity evolution. Since these problems are not being widely solved at a school or family's level therefore, class becomes an important aspect of adaptation and integration. In such a case it is advisable to apply the method of hermeneutic class which helps to enable differences, to hear multiplicity of voices, to implement deep dialogue and point out peculiarity of *other* emphasizing it or suppressing. This would create conditions not only for pupils to understand different conception of identity but also for pedagogues to change didactical provision of methods transferring to the conception of global identity.

## Conclusions

- Having analysed scientific literature it has been revealed that with the changes of modern globalization processes the concept of national identity also change. One-dimensional identity model is changed by a multidimensional one that treats identity's complexity.
- The article shows that contemporary migration changes the conception of nation as a geopolitical formation, the relation with nation's past also changes, the shift of national identity is supposing towards decentered, deterritorised identity.
- It is advisable to include the concept of global identity in subject programmes trying to avoid idealization of national school in the context of intercultural communication need.
- Hermeneutic class method is presented as an alternative to solve the problems of identity safety and development at school that provides conditions to overcome traumas of identity evolution and enables differences in a class, highlights distinctiveness of *other*. This method would allow the pedagogues to represent not the grand narratives but to be pupils' assistants constructing multiple identities.

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## NUO ĮTERITORINTOS LINK IŠCENTRINTOS TAPATYBĖS

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### Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojama tautinės tapatybės kaita ir jos atspindžiai švietimo sistemoje. Remiantis Lietuvos ir užsienio moksliniais tyrimais atskleidžiama tapatybės dinamika ir ją įtakojantys veiksniai. Užsienio autorių tyrimais parodoma tapatybės koncepto kismas nuo vienadimesinio tapatybės modelio prie daugiadimensinio. Lietuvos moksliniais tyrimais išskleidžiama tapatybės problematika švietimo sistemoje per skirtingų mokinių tapatybių refleksavimą klasėje. Straipsnyje pateikiamas hermeneutinės pedagogikos praktikos modelis, sudarantis sąlygas išcentrintos tapatybės įgalinimui klasėje, išvengiant mokinių tapatybės raidos traumatinių pasekmių. Hermeneutinė pedagogika analizuojama kaip metodas plačiąją prasme, siekiant sukurti dialoginę klasės aplinką, įgalinant tapatybių kitoniškumą.

RAKTINIAI ŽODŽIAI: tautinė tapatybė, išcentrinta tapatybė, hermeneutinė pedagogika.